

North Cumberland Fire District

Annual Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2008

Opening:

The annual meeting of the North Cumberland Fire District (NCFD) was called to order at

7:22 p.m. on Wednesday, June 18, 2008 by Chairman Edward LeBlanc. The Pledge of Allegiance was executed.

A. Election of Moderator

Motion was made by Mr. Baglini, seconded by Mr. Lindquist to elect Edward LeBlanc as moderator. All in favor. So voted.

B. Roll Call

Edward LeBlanc Present

John Aharonian Present

Robert Audette Present

Joseph Baglini Present

Brian Campbell Present

Mathew Gannon Present

Paul Lindquist Present

Robert Murray Present

C. Due Proof of Notice of Annual Meeting

Copies of notices (attached) that had been placed in the Woonsocket Call, The Times and the Valley Breeze during the first week of June on either June 4 or 5 and the second week of June on either June 11 or 12 were presented. No dispute arose.

D. Minutes of June 20, 2007 Annual Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Gannon, seconded by Mr. Audette to accept the Minutes of the Annual Meeting dated June 20, 2007. All in favor. So voted.

E. Communications/Reports

Chairman of Board of Trustees

Chairman LeBlanc called attention to:

- Active year, 577 calls so far this year on pace to maintain active call schedule**
- Major fire, house explosion, murder suicide, letter of commendation from the Governor's Office**
- Major accidents on 295**
- Second fire at the same house on Diamond Hill Road**
- No serious injuries to NCFD fire fighters**
- Active prevention program**
- Excellent fiscal health of NCFD**
- Continue to compete for grants - 1,000. grant from Navigant Credit Union this year**

- Improvements to the station
- New extrication equipment
- Upgraded breathing apparatus obtained through a grant
- New fire truck on the horizon
- 14 fire fighters and a Chief, all devoted, professional and well trained
- New fire marshal
- Fire fighters' appreciation night
- Team work with other districts
- Cooperation between firefighters and trustees
- New three year contract to be signed by the 30th of June
- Truck search committee
- Key Leadership for the Consolidation Committee
- Firefighters are excellent community citizens participating in school safety programs, annual cook-out at Community School, Boy Scout leadership, Fourth of July Parade, Holiday Celebration, Lighting of the Tree Ceremony, senior center staff training at Emerald Bay and training at local churches
- Clerk exceeds the standards set by the Open Meeting Laws in terms of posting information on open meetings web-site
- Hard working Tax Collector
- Over abundance of hours put in by the Trustees
- Challenges to contain costs
- Developing and Improving Management Policies
- Upcoming Retirements

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report (attached) dated June 17, 2008 was read aloud by Chairman LeBlanc.

A motion was made by Mr. Audette, seconded by Mr. Campbell to accept the Treasurer's Report dated June 17, 2008. All in favor. So voted.

Tax Collector's Report

The Tax Collector's Report for the month of June 2008 (attached) was read aloud by Chairman LeBlanc.

Tax collector Klara announced that Attorney Baker will be sending out 312 letters of collection to residents who are \$100.00 or more delinquent in their taxes and notifying them of the upcoming tax sale.

The tax collectors office is working to obtain credit card approval to allow residents to pay taxes via credit card.

A motion was made by Mr. Lindquist, seconded by Mr. Murray to accept the Tax Collector's Report dated June 2008. All in favor. So voted.

Fire Chief's Report

Chief Gendreau thanked the trustees, the officers and the personnel of the department noting it as a pleasure to have worked with them over the last ten years. He recognized the most rewarding experience

as being the involvement of the personnel of the department. Their eagerness to be active in major purchases where committees were formed to research and make recommendations is valued.

He also noted funds from Federal grants received and an excess of \$300,000. in pending applications.

F. Personnel Recognition

Lt. Craig Emerson was recognized for his 20 years of service. Firefighter Christopher Smith, who was not in attendance, was acknowledged for 15 years of service.

G. Fiscal Year 2007/2008 Annual Budget

Moderator LeBlanc read aloud each line item asking that questions be held until the end.

Questions were raised on items:

Electricity \$ 6,700. (440)

Heat & Water \$ 10,800. (1,984)

Chief Gendreau explained the decrease in these items is related to an over budgeted amount last fiscal year. Less was spent than budgeted last fiscal year.

Build Supplies, Repairs & Impr. \$ 8, 500. (6,500)

Referencing the previously discussed possibility of air conditioning in the back office, firefighter Brian Bernando expressed concern over the reduction in this line item. Chairman LeBlanc responded that unfortunately air conditioning may not be possible this year but may be in the future.

Maint. & Upgrade School House \$ 0. (500)

With nothing planned for the school house in the upcoming fiscal year, nothing has been budgeted. In the event of need, the contingency fund may be looked at.

Payroll \$1,009,000. 105, 481.

Chairman LeBlanc reported the increase (11.6%) in this line item is attributed to the labor contract and three possible retirements which would include severance pay and any unused sick leave or vacation time.

Computer Development Program \$ 3,000. (1,200)

Voicing concern over the tax collector's computer, firefighter Bernando questioned the amount budgeted for the Computer Development Program line item. Chief Gendreau explained the tax collector's office has been made self-sufficient. Anything

pertaining to that office will come out of the computerized tax bills line item.

Prior to voting on the budget, Chairman LeBlanc highlighted the line item Truck Lease explaining a truck committee had worked for the past year researching and developing a plan for a new truck.

On behalf of the truck committee, Lt. Emerson addressed the body explaining the truck chosen combines some of the latest technologies. Once specifications were developed, a specification package was put out to bid. Several inquiries were received and one formal bid was received from Pierce with a sticker price of \$592,180. Given some incentives and discounts it was reduced to approximately \$550,000.

With truck delivery not expected for another 7 months, 3 months at \$6,000. was proposed, arriving at \$18,000 in the truck lease line item. The board's recommendation to the residents would be to move forward with this truck.

Moderator LeBlanc made it clear that in going forward with approval of the budget, approval for the truck was incorporated.

Mr. William Dennen voiced concern that not including a down payment, a proposed lease for 10 years at \$6,000. per month would total \$720,000. Chairman LeBlanc explained the Board is currently

exploring the best financing for the truck and not set on the \$6,000. per month. Mr. Murray explained the payment would depend on how much was put down based on what was recovered from the tax sale. The \$6,000. figure was placed in the budget anticipating the worse case scenario. Similar to a 30 year mortgage, the total with interest is much higher than the purchase price. Chairman LeBlanc offered Mr. Dennen to review the financing arrangements once decided upon.

With the proposed budget at 1,774,261.00, which will represent a tax rate increase from \$1.20 to \$1.26 (a 5% tax rate increase), motion was made by Mr. Baglini, seconded by Mr. Audette, to accept the budget for 2008. All in favor. So voted.

Tax Rate

Chairman LeBlanc noted that in 2007 the district had an assessed valuation of all property of \$1,272,596,326. For 2008, assessed valuation is \$1,252,448,289. A \$20,000,000. decrease in property valuations. If the budget was not increased, the tax rate would still be going up to cover the reduction of valuation. For the past three years the tax rate has stayed level at \$1.20 (the lowest of the four districts). An increase to \$1.26 is required to cover the budget. Unless substantial renovations or additions have been done in the past year, many residents will find that even with the increase in the tax rate, the decrease in valuation will increase their tax payment minimally.

E. Election of Trustees

The Board is comprised of eight trustees and each year the terms of two trustees expire. Notices were placed in the newspaper seeking people interested in the available trustee positions. Responses were received from Robert Audette and Paul Lindquist.

A motion was made by Mr. Gannon, seconded by Mr. Campbell, to nominate Mr. Lindquist and Mr. Audette to continue for another term on the Board of Trustees. All in favor. So moved.

F. Old Business

Fire Department Consolidation Study

Mr. Lindquist reported the Consolidation Committee had disbanded their efforts due to the difference in tax rates between the four districts. Although there would be savings of equipment through a consolidation in the future, during the 1st and 2nd years there was not going to be enough savings to justify the higher tax rate to our district.

H. New Business

Department Apparatus

Discussed under Fiscal Year 2007/2008 Annual Budget

I. Public Comment

Thomas P. Heaney questioned the extent of coverage available to call personnel in terms of workers' compensation and lost wages.

Not being familiar with the specifics of Mr. Heaney's situation, Chairman LeBlanc was not prepared to engage in a conversation tonight. He offered to look into it and to make sure our volunteers are aware of what type of protections is provided to them while serving the district.

Adjournment

Motion is made by Mr. Audette, seconded by Mr. Campbell, to adjourn the meeting of the North Cumberland Fire District at 8:14 p.m. All in favor. So voted.

Minutes submitted by: Fay Dakake, Clerk _____

**Approved by: Edward LeBlanc _____
Chairman**